

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 30, 2012

Agenda Item: Amelia Island Fishing Access Site (Region 7)

Division: Fish and Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

The Amelia Island Fishing Access Site is located along the Yellowstone River near the town of Hysham. A private landowner donated the 4.8-acre parcel to FWP in 2008 for use as a public fishing access site. The site is an important location for public access on the Yellowstone, with the closest FWP fishing access sites located seven miles upstream and 20 miles downstream. Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) officials recently notified FWP that a portion of the land believed to be owned by the landowner who donated the property is actually an accreted island owned by DNRC (A small channel of the river separates the donated property from the main river channel and creates an island, which belongs to the state and is administered by DNRC). FWP commissioned a survey of the accreted land and determined that it is 1.8 acres in size. FWP engineers concluded that this DNRC parcel is the only location suitable for provide access to the river – the donated property is not directly adjacent to the river. FWP is seeking the Commission's approval to negotiate a perpetual easement for use of the DNRC parcel. FWP would then develop a public boat launching facility at the site. Future development may include a parking lot, vault latrine, fencing, rock barriers and signage.

Public Involvement Process and Results

The acquisition of the donated property included public involvement. There has been no public involvement to date on negotiating an easement for use of the DNRC parcel. If approved by the Commission, FWP will develop an environmental assessment, which will include public notification and a comment period. Because an environmental assessment was already conducted on the original parcel, the Department may conduct an abbreviated assessment on the proposed easement.

Alternatives and Analysis

Alternative A: Negotiate an easement to use DNRC parcel. Obtaining a perpetual easement on this property is necessary to provide public access to the Yellowstone River and would enable FWP to develop a small parking area and boat ramp as previously planned. It is also consistent with the region's access priorities and management capabilities. Alternative B: Under this alternative FWP would not establish an easement for the DNRC parcel. As a result, the public would not have boat access to the Yellowstone River at this site (Although FWP owns the adjacent Amelia Island Wildlife Management, it does not offer suitable boat access to the river).

Agency Recommendation and Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission endorse negotiations with DNRC to obtain an easement to use the accreted island, which would ensure public access to the Yellowstone River at this location (Alternative A).

Proposed Motion

"I move that the Commission authorize the Department to negotiate a perpetual easement with DNRC at the Amelia Island Fishing Access Site on the Yellowstone River."

private:stream

